

Army commander wins national award

Magazine honors Lt. Col. Edward Clayson for medical work

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FREDERICK — A long way from his days behind a laboratory bench 25 years ago, an Army lieutenant colonel is lucky to fit any office time into his packed schedule.

As a commander and product manager for a budding military medical and health system, Lt. Col. Edward Clayson is away from his Fort Detrick office about two weeks of every month for his jam-packed job.

Late next week, he leaves for Kuwait and Iraq to spend several weeks talking to users of the system, Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care, or MC4, which is headquartered on post.

Clayson, 46, has already flown overseas more than a dozen times this year. Since he enlisted in the military in 1982, he has traveled 41 times to 27 different countries.

The MC4 system, which was initially tested in Kuwait in 2003, is now used by all medical units and combat units' medical personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. This summer the military will start using MC4 in Korea and South America as well, Clayson said.



Lt. Col. Edward Clayson

MC4, an information management/information technology system (IM/IT), tracks medical information technology and troops' health care in war zones. The military has used the system to create lifelong electronic medical records for more than 2 million troops, tracking their care from battlefield to hospital.

Before coming to MC4 in 2005, Clayson served in the Pentagon as medical technology development director in the office of the deputy assistant to the secretary of defense for chemical and biological defense.

A microbiologist by training, Clayson began his career in basic

and applied laboratory research in 1982, eventually moving into product management.

He jokes that when he came on board with MC4 he couldn't even spell "IM/IT" but says he has taken to the frequent interaction with users that was missing from his previous jobs.

Clayson spends much of his time out on the battlefield in Iraq, Afghanistan and Qatar, talking to users and medical commanders directly about what they like and don't like about the system and their suggestions for changes.

"People appreciate that they can interact directly with the product manager," he said. "They know they're being heard and something will be done."

Clayson was honored March 26 with Federal Computer Week magazine's 2007 Fed 100 Award, which selects 100 IM/IT leaders from federal government and industry. The weekly magazine featured Clayson and nine other winners in its March 26 issue.

Every now and then innovative users come up with ways to "get the best bang for their buck out of their system," Clayson said.

In April 2006, during a tour of medical units in Iraq, one commander showed Clayson how an MC4 application identified a necessary doctor swap at two clinics 50 miles apart.

The medical battalion

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Slice

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commander, Lt. Col. William Grimes, had queried the top 10 most common diagnoses in clinic and saw at one clinic diarrhea was the most common

medical problem. The clinic was being run by a sports medicine physician.

At the other clinic, sprained ankles and knee problems from rocky terrain were the most

common problem. The clinic was being run by a gastroenterologist, a doctor who studies gastrointestinal tract disorders.

Grimes could see the need for a switch of the clinics' doctors, correcting what could have

been a costly problem within hours rather than days, Clayson said.

Clayson lives in Walkersville with his wife, Betty, and their two children, Faye, 21, and Eddie, 18.